

## Healthy Change through Diet and Exercise

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Summertime is approaching again, and many of us are dreading the months of shorts and swimming suits, especially if we've spent all winter eating cold-weather comfort food in front of the television! So, like every other year, we decide it's time to shape up: Eat right, exercise, and lose weight. Many people assume that to undertake these tasks requires a complete overhaul of their life. Many also think they can't get healthy without spending money on diet plans and gym memberships. Yet, even small changes can rack up big results, not only in a person's physical appearance but more importantly, in his or her overall health. Best of all, it doesn't have to cost much, or anything at all!

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) publishes some scary statistics: One in three adults is obese, and about 33 percent of adults suffer from high blood pressure. 25 percent of US adults have impaired fasting glucose, or pre-diabetes. More than 23 million adults over the age of 20 have type 2 diabetes. All of these contribute to the most common cause of death in America: Heart disease. And yet, heart disease is largely preventable with smart eating habits and regular exercise.

Fort Carson Soldiers and their Families have all the resources they need to make diet and exercise a priority. The Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation operates four gyms on the Installation that are complete with cardio equipment, weights, and various fitness classes at little to no cost for beneficiaries. Civilians who are DoD ID card-holders can also take advantage of free access to the state-of-the-art fitness facilities. Personal training is available, and is customized to each person. More information on the fitness centers and the programs offered can be found at <http://www.mwrfortcarson.com/physical-fitness-centers.php>. For civilians working at Fort Carson, the Mountain Post Wellness Center operates a civilian wellness program twice a year that provides a fitness screening and allows the employee to exercise 3 hours weekly, paid, during duty hours. Fort Carson also has a comprehensive trail system for use by joggers, walkers, and cyclists. If you plan to start an exercise plan and haven't exercised before, or it's been a while, always get clearance from your health care provider first to ensure you are healthy enough to exercise. If the need for child care is keeping you from visiting the gym regularly, hourly care is available at the Southwest Child and Youth Center. Children receiving care there must first be registered at CYS central registration. Start the registration process by calling 719-526-1101 or visiting building 1518.

For those not sure where to start with a diet and who are overweight or obese, a visit to your primary care provider is a good place to start. Your provider can refer you to a nutrition expert to assist you in making changes that will fit your lifestyle. Often, even small changes can make a big difference. Swapping your afternoon candy fix for a piece of fruit can settle down a sweet tooth for fewer calories (and more fiber and nutrients!) and a switch as simple as buying whole-grain instead of white bread ensures the calories you consume are both more filling and more nutritious. Using extra virgin olive oil in your cooking rather than butter or margarine is another smart change. A visit to a nutritionist can help you determine where your biggest diet pitfalls are, and what you can do to minimize them.

Good health is the foundation for a long and productive life for the whole family, and it's never too soon, or too late, to start a journey toward better health. Fort Carson makes it easy by giving you access to everything you need, from nutrition advice to exercise facilities and classes of all kinds. All you have to do is decide that today is the day for change!